

REMARKS

This Response is in reply to the Official Office Action mailed December 20, 2006.

Claims 1-35 were pending in the application. Claims 19-23 have been withdrawn, claims 1-10, 12-14, and 24-25 were rejected, and claims 11 and 15-18 were objected to.

Claims 1, 2, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,148,172 (hereinafter Kanda) in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,932,313 (hereinafter Barton). Kanda discloses a paper feeding system that includes an input tray to house a stack of media sheets. Each tray includes a pick up roll that moves the media sheet from a media stack, through a separator roller, and then into a registration roller. The media sheet is then conveyed by a conveyance roller to a loop roller and into the image forming area.

Barton discloses an input mechanism that includes an input tray sized to hold a stack of media sheets. A pick mechanism is positioned within the tray and includes a pivoting arm with a pair of feed rollers positioned on the top-most media sheet. The rollers are rotated via a motor and intermediate drive gear to move the media sheets from the input tray and into the media path.

Claim 1 has been amended to now include that the removable media tray includes a multi-purpose tray input on an exterior of the housing. The input provides for a user to manually feed media sheets into the media tray, and for the sheets to be conveyed to the exit port. Neither Kanda nor Barton discloses this structure. Therefore, independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2, 12, and 13 are not made obvious for at least these reasons and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 6 has been canceled, and claim 7 has been amended to coincide with the amendment to claim 1.

Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanda in view of Barton, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,758,249. These claims are not obvious for at least the same reasons discussed above for independent claim 1.

Claims 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanda in view of Barton, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,327,207 (hereinafter Otake). Otake discloses a copying machine with separate means for inputting media sheets. The device comprises four separate cartridges each sized to hold multiple stacks of media sheets. Multiple pick mechanisms are positioned at each tray to pick media sheets from each of the stacks and move the sheets towards an image forming area. In addition, the device includes a manual feed positioned above and away from the input trays. ***The manual feed is not part of the cartridges, but rather is a separate input mechanism into the device.*** The manual feed includes an input to receive manually-fed sheets from an exterior of the device. The manual feed includes a tray to hold the manually-fed media sheets and a roller to receive the leading edge and move the media sheets into the image formation area.

Claim 1 as amended requires the removable media tray to include a multi-purpose tray input on an exterior of the housing in addition to a primary media stack area. Therefore, claim 1, and dependent claims 7-10 are not obvious for at least these reasons and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 14, 24-28, 30, 33, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Otake. Claim 14 has been amended to now include the subject matter of allowable claim 15. Claim 15 has been canceled. Therefore, independent claim 14, and dependent claims 16-18 are not anticipated for at least these reasons and are in condition for allowance. Claim 16 has been amended to now depend from claim 14.

Claim 24 has been amended to now include that the removable media tray includes first and second media sheet stack areas that are generally horizontally aligned with the second media sheet stack area including an input port that leads from an exterior of the image forming apparatus to receive manually-fed media sheets. Otake discloses a device that includes removable media trays each sized to hold one or more stacks of media sheets, and a separate manual feed positioned away from the cassettes to receive manually feed media sheets. Otake does not disclose the manual feed within the removable media tray. Therefore, independent claim 24 and dependent claims 25-29 are not anticipated for at least these reasons and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 30 requires the steps of picking a media sheet from a first media source by actuating a motor in a first direction, and picking a media sheet from a second media source by actuating a motor in a second direction. The first and second media sources and the motor are all included within a removable media tray. Otake does not disclose these steps. ***Otake discloses pick mechanisms removing media sheets from the respective input areas within the tray, but there is no disclosure that a common motor operates both rollers within the same tray nor that the motor can be operated in first and second directions to pick the media sheet from the specific input areas.*** Therefore, claim 30 and dependent claims 31 and 32 are not anticipated for at least these reasons and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 31 is amended to correct minor errors in the original claim language.

Claim 33 has been amended to now include a removable media tray with a drive train to selectively pick from first and second media sources, with the motor driving the drive train to pick a media sheet from said first media source by rotating in one direction, and driving the drive train to pick a media sheet from said second media source by rotating in the opposite direction. Otake does not include this structure and therefore

claim 33 is not anticipated for at least these reasons. Claims 34 and 35 have been canceled.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicants' submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. If any issues remain unresolved, the Applicant's attorney requests a telephone interview to expedite allowance and issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

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